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POLITICAL SETTLEMENT VS. FINAL BATTLE

Vietnam: Saigon's Two Options

Time is running out for the Saigon regime. Faced with a near-hopeless military situation, Thieu's followers—who remain in control in Saigon despite Thieu's resignation—must decide whether to surrender power to other political figures who might be able to open the way for peace talks with the PRG. A political solution is still a live option, but unless Thieu's closest associates are willing to let go, the only alternative appears to be a final military battle for Saigon. The Saigon regime's chances in such a battle are virtually nil.

During the past two weeks of political turmoil in Saigon, sparked by the loss of the northern half of the country, the PRG has carefully massed its forces around the South Vietnamese capital. The PRG's military strategy now appears to include the following elements:

- To draw large Saigon mainforce units into battlefields outside the capital itself, in places of the PRG's choosing, such as Xuan Loc.
- To assemble an overwhelming military force around the capital, including large numbers of infantry, heavy artillery and tanks.
- To neutralize Saigon's airpower through powerful anti-air-



photo / Vietnam News Agency

Saigon soldiers captured by PRG at Da Nang

craft defenses and attacks on Saigon airfields.

- To seal off Saigon from territory still under its control, especially the Mekong Delta.

The PRG used Xuan Loc, scene of the heaviest fighting in the

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FIVE YEARS IN THE MAQUIS

Phnom Penh's New Government

The Royal Government of National Union (GRUNK), which took power in Cambodia on April 17, is expected to step quickly into the tasks of governing the country, although the scars of five years of war will undoubtedly take many years to heal. The leaders of GRUNK are experienced and well-known in Cambodia—all 12 have served in past Cambodian governments. In addition, GRUNK can call on a large body of experienced administrators and professionals who are already loyal to the insurgents. Since the 1970 coup that overthrew Prince Norodom Sihanouk, thousands of middle-class people, civil servants and professionals have left Phnom Penh to join NUF supporters in Paris or have gone directly to rural provinces controlled by the National United Front.

Among them were almost all of the intellectuals of any reputation in Cambodia—including a majority of the country's doctors. In the countryside, a medical faculty was set up under one of Cambodia's leading surgeons, and a corps of paramedics has been trained along the lines of China's barefoot doctors. Many of these exiles from Phnom Penh paid little attention to the 1970 coup, but became disillusioned later by the corruption and incompetence of the Lon Nol regime. Some have written letters describing why they were attracted to the NUF's liber-

ated zones. Frequently mentioned are genuine democracy, a lack of corruption, a feeling of national cohesion, and the sense that the NUF holds the future of Cambodia.

Sihanouk's son-in-law, Prince Sisowath Doussady—whom Sihanouk describes as a "conservative young man who never knowingly met a Khmer Rouge in his life until he arrived in the liberated zone at the end of August 1971"—wrote his father-in-law: "In joining the liberated zone, I have chosen the path of dignity and honor. . . . One detail I found especially moving: people help each other in all their activities—mutual aid in combat with the enemy, mutual aid in working in the fields, mutual aid in the cultural and social fields, with the setting up of schools for children and adults of all ages, and of training centers for nurses and public health workers . . . Life here is really dynamic!"

A group of professionals, which included Phnom Penh's most famous surgeon, a dentist, several engineers and civil servants, wrote in March 1971: "The liberated zone starts not very far from the capital, but we had an impression of entering an entirely different world. No barbed wire around administrative buildings! No puppet troops with bayonets on their rifles and hatred on their faces searching passersby from head to toe! No bribes, police raids, curfews, humiliation of young women. Knowledge is respected; talent appreciated and encouraged."

For the past five years, GRUNK has been administering the vast majority of Cambodia. The government reaches to the hamlet level, where committees of three to seven people are elected to administer in the name of the National United Front.

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Vietnam *[continued from page 1]*

past two weeks, as a kind of magnet drawing some of Saigon's best remaining troops away from the capital. Over 8,000 of them were besieged until the city fell to the PRG on April 21. At first, Pentagon analysts optimistically portrayed the "stiff resistance" by the Saigon troops as a sign that they could mount a viable defense of the capital. When it became evident that the town could collapse, Thieu took a calculated gamble and attempted to reinforce the Xuan Loc troops with other units badly needed near Saigon itself. This opened up serious weaknesses on other fronts of the Saigon defensive perimeter.

From the northwest, near Tay Ninh, Thieu sent Gen. Khoi's third armored brigade, which included 200 tanks. Some 2,500 paratroopers were airlifted in to join the armored units. But neither was able to break through, and they were finally thrown back with heavy losses. Two days later the town fell, forcing elements of the Saigon force at Xuan Loc to pull back to the Bien Hoa air base, just 15 miles from Saigon.

While the Xuan Loc forces were pinned down, other PRG units were slipping past the strategic city and moving on towards Bien Hoa and Saigon. The Pentagon estimates that the PRG now has 100,000 to 200,000 troops in the Saigon area. In addition, the PRG has methodically amassed an overwhelming artillery and armor force in the region. An important factor at Xuan Loc was the presence of PRG heavy 130mm artillery which pounded the town with up to 1,000 shells a day. Military analysts believe that with the fall of Xuan Loc, these guns—which have a range of 15 miles—will be moved closer to the capital and in position to shell Saigon's Tan Son Nhut airport.

The Pentagon expected Saigon to rely on its massive airpower in any large-scale fighting. But in the opinion of U.S. military analysts now, Saigon's airpower has been essentially neutralized, and would not be an important factor in a battle for Saigon. PRG shelling has made the huge Bien Hoa airbase almost useless, forcing Saigon to transfer its remaining fighter bombers to Tan Son Nhut, which already must handle all of Saigon's commercial traffic.

The planes that do get off the ground are faced with a formidable array of PRG anti-aircraft weapons—radar-controlled anti-aircraft guns and SAM 7 portable heat-seeking missiles. Even the large SAM 2 missiles used against B52s in Hanoi have been spotted within 40 miles of Saigon. Aircraft losses have been high—much

higher, some analysts believe, than Saigon is willing to acknowledge. This neutralization of Saigon's airforce is especially significant in the flat and often defoliated terrain around Saigon.

The PRG has also been systematically sealing off the main routes to the capital. Much of the fighting in the Mekong Delta has centered along Highway Four, in areas 20 to 40 miles from the capital. The highway is the main link for rice supplies and the only ground route for pulling troops in the Delta back for the defense of Saigon. Heavy fighting has also taken place along Highway 22 leading to the important provincial capital of Tay Ninh, 65 miles northwest of Saigon.

At the same time, the PRG advanced down the coast, with the takeover of Phan Rang and Phan Thiet on the South China sea. The last remaining escape route by sea from Saigon is now the small port of Vung Tau at the mouth of the narrow Saigon river.

The PRG's current strategy typifies the way in which they have combined military and political struggle throughout the war. The overwhelming military force which they have assembled around Saigon is aimed in part at forcing political changes inside the capital, which could make a military assault unnecessary: a scenario which even the Pentagon admits the PRG would prefer.

That option is still open. But it will take political changes far greater than Thieu's resignation if a political solution is to be reached.

The PRG's conditions for a political settlement have remained the same since at least last October. At that time they demanded that Thieu and his close asso-

ciates be overthrown and replaced by an administration which "really desires peace, independence, democracy and national concord, and is willing to strictly implement the Paris accords." In addition, they called for the U.S. to end all its military involvement in South Vietnam, and "withdraw its military personnel disguised as civilians."

Thieu's resignation, said the PRG, "does not fully respond to these demands." "Thieu has gone away," they said, "but the war machine and army of Thieu remains intact" and "above all, his war policy has not changed." The PRG summed up its position by saying that the new government is simply "the Thieu regime, without Thieu."

Third Force leader Gen. Duong Van (Big) Minh might yet play a central role in opening talks with the PRG. But he himself realizes that this would be a futile attempt unless Thieu's men are really out of power. That is why he turned down an offer April 24 to become premier so long as Tran Van Huong retains the presidency.

Both the Buddhist National Reconciliation Force, which backs Big Minh, and the strongly anti-communist Catholic opposition led by Father Tran Huu Thanh agree on the need for a new government, although they are divided on who should form it and what it should do.

Few political figures in Saigon believe that they can reverse the tide in South Vietnam, and negotiations are the order of the day. But simply calling for talks is clearly not enough. What is needed now, say political analysts in Saigon, is a radical change of regime to convince the PRG of Saigon's willingness to negotiate on the basis of the Paris peace accord.

Suffocation Bomb

The Saigon armed forces last week used an ultra-lethal anti-personnel bomb developed by the U.S. The bomb, called a CBU-55 depression bomb, sucks up oxygen over a radius of 250 yards for long enough to kill all human life. More than one hundred and twenty CBU-55's were dropped on PRG forces in Xuan Loc when Saigon soldiers retreated April 21. Reports from Saigon say that hundreds, perhaps thousands of PRG troops were killed by the bombs, and that there were clear indications that the soldiers had died of asphyxiation.

The Pentagon acknowledged April 24 that the Saigon armed forces may have used the CBU-55. Pentagon spokesman Maj. Gen. Wynant Sidle said that the CBU-55's were designed to clear mines

from helicopter landing zones. He said they had been tested in South Vietnam in 1970 and that some had been left behind. He also acknowledged that these bombs might be capable of using up all the air in an area 200 yards across.

Arthur Kanegis of NARMIC, a research organization of the American Friends Service Committee, told Internews that the prime contractor for the CBU-55 is Honeywell Corp. *Ordnance* magazine of Sept.-Oct. 1971, he said, describes the CBU-55 as "Ethylene oxide fuel which is released upon ground impact and mixes with the surrounding air forming a highly explosive cloud. When the mixture of fuel and air reaches its proper proportion, a time igniter detonates the cloud. A resulting blast levels vegetation, destroys structures which it has penetrated, and kills enemy personnel by blast overpressure."

"Streets of the City Filled With Life"

photos / Vietnam News Agency



PRG forces being welcomed into Da Nang



Crowded market place in Hue



Neighborhood demonstration in support of new administration in Hue

Dispatches from Western journalists and reports from the Provisional Revolutionary Government indicate that life is returning to normal in areas recently taken over by the PRG in South Vietnam. A group of western reporters recently visited the city of Da Nang, arriving on a flight carrying French relief supplies.

Several long-time French residents of the city told a correspondent for the French news agency AFP that there was no bloodbath when the PRG took Da Nang on March 29, and that PRG soldiers helped restore order quickly. A French priest, Father Charmop, told the reporter that "the liberation forces here were 100 times better behaved than those who liberated my birth place of Savoie [France] in 1944." Andre Orbach, director of the French cultural center in Da Nang, said if the PRG troops had not arrived rapidly, all the city's installations would have been looted. He said that the panic of the Saigon soldiers was fueled by the behavior of U.S. officials who fled in an "indiscreet manner" and by Saigon authorities who threatened that once Da Nang fell to the communists, it would be bombed.

Another AFP correspondent, Roland-Pierre Paringaux, described South Vietnam's second largest city as a "picture of calm," and said "the streets of the city are full of life." "The first weeks of contact between Da Nang's residents and the Communist forces seem to have reassured both sides," he said. "The military presence is inconspicuous. Soldiers on patrol are indulgent, even after the 9 p.m. curfew, which is ignored by a few strollers and street merchants."

"Schools, stores and markets have begun to open, a few at a time," he continued. "Procurement of supplies, however, still poses some problems, as does medical organization, since some hospitals were said to have been looted by rampaging soldiers and civilians . . . Foreigners who stayed in Da Nang when it fell—some by choice and others because they had no choice—all affirm that the PRG took control of the city in a perfectly proper, dignified way."



Young people in Da Nang explaining PRG policies



Military vehicles abandoned by Saigon army in retreat from Hue

U.S. POLICY BACKFIRES

Cambodia's 'Dollar Addicts' Defeated

The seizure of power in Phnom Penh by the Royal Government of National Union marks the final failure of U.S. policy in Cambodia: a neutral country has been turned into a nation led by communists. Following the U.S.-backed overthrow of Prince Sihanouk's neutralist regime, Washington tried in vain for five years to keep in power a corrupt, dictatorial and unpopular regime using every means available—from a U.S. ground invasion and massive bombing to large doses of military and economic aid, administered by U.S. advisers.

The regime created by Lon Nol's coup on March 18, 1970 was based largely on a handful of generals and wealthy businessmen who had been courted by the U.S. over the previous decade. Sihanouk called them the "dollar addicts." In the early 1960s, they enjoyed the fruits of U.S. economic and military aid, both of which were terminated by Sihanouk in 1963 after several attempted coups against him by the CIA-supported right-wing Khmer Serai guerrillas.

Sihanouk says that U.S. administrators of the aid programs "consciously developed a sort of compradore class with a vested interest in pushing U.S. policies . . . Within a couple of years, and exclusively through manipulations of dollar 'aid,' the U.S. had created a powerful internal lobby in our country, a political fifth column working to scrap neutrality and place Cambodia under the SEATO [the U.S.-sponsored anticommunist alli-

ance of Southeast Asian nations] umbrella."

Sihanouk's decision to terminate U.S. aid had important economic consequences since the dollars had paid almost a third of the annual cost of the Cambodian police and armed forces and had enabled Cambodia to balance its international payments. The Cambodian government had to evolve an alternative economic strategy. In their book *Cambodia in the Southeast Asian War*, Malcolm Caldwell and Lek Tan recall that the elaboration of this strategy fell "to then minister in charge of the economy and finances, Khieu Samphan . . . two immediate steps were taken: nationalization of import-export businesses and nationalization of the private banks."

"Three notable repercussions followed," according to Caldwell and Tan, "each with political implications. First, the growth rate of the economy subsided; second, the government had to pursue a policy of financial stringency; and third, an abrupt end was put to all the multiple openings for personal profiteering that the American presence and lavish American funds had offered. These austerity measures hit mainly the urban elite, which as long as American aid was flowing in had been able to sustain luxurious life styles beyond the power of the Cambodian economy to sustain. Restoration of the American link and of the palmy days of U.S. aid and commerce with individual Americans in Cambodia became

the compulsive dream of these elite groups—top army officers, big compradores, Phnom Penh property owners, import-export merchants, and top government officials dealing with Americans. . . . They set out to sabotage the economy."

Most of the men on the NUF's list of Seven Traitors—especially Lon Nol and Sirik Matak—are mentioned repeatedly in connection with profiteering from U.S. aid and attempts to sabotage the economic plans of Sihanouk and Samphan. These men, backed by Washington, led the pressures from the right in 1969 to de-nationalize industry and banking in order to secure a resumption of U.S. aid and loans from the World Bank. Although Sihanouk opposed these measures which undermined his economic plans, they were forced through the right-wing National Assembly in December 1969, and formed part of the series of events culminating in his ouster three months later.

During the next five years, when Cambodia was being devastated by war, the "dollar addicts" reportedly amassed huge fortunes from siphoning off U.S. aid—some estimates are that as much as 50 percent of the more than \$3 billion in U.S. aid was pocketed by the generals and politicians of the Lon Nol regime.

All the methods of corruption are still untold, but they included robbing the pay of the Phnom Penh soldiers and selling massive amounts of the U.S.-supplied weapons and ammunition to the NUF insurgents. The Cambodian generals became famous for listing "phantom soldiers" on their payrolls to collect the wages of non-existent troops—estimated at more than 25 percent of the paper strength of Phnom Penh's army at its peak.

There were consistent reports of U.S.-airlifted medical supplies and rice mysteriously disappearing en route from the airport to the capital, even in the last days of the regime. And in the final hours of their rule, Phnom Penh officials tried to make a last buck off UN relief supplies. UNICEF was forced to fly powdered milk and other relief supplies to starving children on Air Cambodge planes at as much as \$1,000 a ton rather than accept free delivery aboard the U.S.-financed airlift.

U.S. embassy people were privately critical of the Phnom Penh regime and tried to dissociate the U.S. from the undeniable corruption. But the corruption was built into the situation: those willing to be the tools of U.S. policy in Cambodia were only in it for the money.



Cambodians greet NUF soldiers with smiles and shouts of "Peace"

Who's Who in GRUNK

PRINCE NORODOM SIHANOUK: Head of State of the Royal Government of National Union (GRUNK), president of the National United Front of Cambodia (NUF).



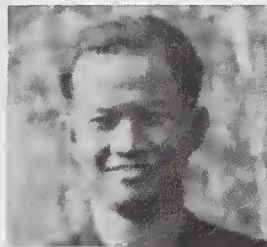
From a royal family, Sihanouk was appointed king of Cambodia by the French in 1941. In 1953, Sihanouk negotiated Cambodia's independence from France, beginning a long struggle to keep his country neutral and out of the Indochina War. In 1955, he abdicated the throne, became premier and established the Sangkum Party, a single front that included a broad spectrum of political groups and dominated Cambodian politics until 1970.

In the 1960s, he narrowly escaped assassination several times at the hands of the CIA-backed Cambodian right wing. In 1965, he broke relations with the U.S., restoring them only in 1969.

Sihanouk was overthrown in March 1970. In his book *My War with the CIA* he describes evidence of the CIA's role in the coup that brought Lon Nol to power. Sihanouk says that the U.S. expected him to retire to France, but that instead he chose the path of patriotism, living in Peking and serving as head and chief foreign emissary of the Cambodian resistance. In the last six months, the U.S. pressured Sihanouk to break with the NUF and return to Phnom Penh to head a coalition government. While he says he is not a communist and does not expect to have a future role inside Cambodia, Sihanouk refused to undercut the NUF. In mid-April, he says he told the U.S. that he would "remain until the end on the side of my Khmer Rouge allies" and that "there must be absolutely no frustrating of so deserved a victory."

KHIEU SAMPHAN: Deputy Prime Minister of the Royal Government of National Union, Commander-in-Chief of the People's Liberation Armed Forces, an economist with a Ph.D. from the University of Paris. Sihanouk has often said that Khieu Samphan is the real leader inside Cambodia.

As a high school student, Khieu Samphan was active in the movement against French colonialism. Born to a poor family, he received a scholarship in 1953 to study in Paris. After the Geneva Agreements were signed in 1954, he led a student movement in France against the beginnings of U.S. intervention in Cambodia. Back home in 1958, he published a paper, *L'Observateur*, served two terms as a deputy in the national legislature, and was Minister of Trade. In 1966, the right wing took over the National Assembly, but because of their immense popularity, three leftist deputies survived, among



them Khieu Samphan. However, right-wing pressure increased and in 1967 Khieu Samphan and the two other deputies—Hou Youn and Hu Nim—fled to the countryside to found Khmer Rouge resistance bases. They were careful not to attack Sihanouk, focusing their attention on Lon Nol, head of the police and army, and on the right wing.

Sihanouk and Khieu Samphan are often described as former enemies. They played quite different roles—Khieu Samphan, a leftist warning of a U.S.-backed right-wing takeover, and Sihanouk the neutralist playing a balancing act between left and right. Yet Sihanouk often spoke of the leftist deputies as the best hope for Cambodia's future. After the 1970 coup, Khieu Samphan and his allies agreed immediately to join Sihanouk in a united front.

HU NIM: Minister of Information and Propaganda in GRUNK and a military commander in the People's Liberation Armed Forces. Hu Nim received a Ph.D. in political science and law from the University of Paris. He was one of three leftist deputies elected in 1966 during a right-wing sweep of the National Assembly. In 1967, he joined Khieu Samphan and Hou Youn in the countryside.



Hu Nim (l.) Hou Youn (r.)

HOU YOUN: Minister of Interior, Communal Reforms and Cooperatives of GRUNK and a military commander in the PLAF. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Paris in 1955, was elected to the National Assembly from Kompong Cham province in 1958, survived the 1966 elections, and went underground with the Khmer Rouge in 1967.

Phnom Penh

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Emphasis has been placed on agriculture to feed the population, although NUF leaders are committed to developing a well-rounded independent economy. There has been some land reform with land owned by collaborators with the Lon Nol regime confiscated and distributed to landless peasants. Land rents have been reduced, and consumers' and producers' cooperatives have been set up to eliminate middlemen and stabilize prices.

While Washington has emphasized differences and divisions within the insurgent forces, the NUF and GRUNK stress their ability to unite widely diverse elements in Cambodian society. "Broad national unity" is a constant theme. While the NUF is often accused by Western reporters of eliminating Buddhism, it is in fact recognized as a state religion under the NUF program, and a special characteristic of the NUF has been the broad participation of Buddhist monks.

In 1973, French writer Serge Thion published a series of articles in *Le Monde* after a rare visit to the NUF zones. He described many aspects of life, but one thing which he said particularly struck him was the contrast in day-to-day moral-

ity between Phnom Penh and the NUF-held areas. "In Phnom Penh," he said, "bars, prostitution, gambling dens and thieves have invaded the streets in a good part of the city. The military police have implanted their gangsterism. Corruption is everywhere . . .

"On the other hand, in the zone held by the NUF, a few weeks of propaganda was enough to suppress gambling and drunkenness, to the great relief of the wives. Corruption does not exist and the morality of the troops is such that fami-

lies are easily persuaded to allow their young daughters to join cultural groups or production units which tour the countryside. That morality which has been recaptured in the twinkling of an eye is certainly the sort of security to which the traditional peasantry aspires—fervent, and very different from the caricatured modernism which makes life in so many Asian cities so derisory and painful. It is a reflex of conservation. It feeds the energies of a society which knows with confidence it is not condemned."

CIA RADIO STATION?

On April 21, NUF leader Prince Norodom Sihanouk charged that the Khmer Serei, a CIA-sponsored right-wing group had set up a phony radio station and was broadcasting alarmist information about supposed NUF atrocities in Phnom Penh. Sihanouk said that a neighboring country—presumably Thailand—was harboring the station.

In the first days following the NUF takeover in Phnom Penh, a clandestine radio station purporting to represent the NUF said that the insurgents had beheaded former premier Long Boret and Gen. Lon Non. The station also said that 21 foreigners had been killed in Phnom Penh, a story later denied by diplomatic sources in radio contact with the Cambodian capital. Reuters reported that the authenticity of the station

was in doubt and that it was not broadcasting on frequencies normally used by the NUF or Phnom Penh radio.

The Khmer Serei, charged by Sihanouk with setting up the fake radio, was organized by the CIA in the 1950s and is composed of right-wing Cambodians who carried out commando raids and clandestine activities against Prince Sihanouk until he was overthrown in 1970. Their leader, Son Ngoc Thanh, was one of the seven traitors condemned by the NUF.

Two years ago, a similar story emerged about CIA-sponsored fake radio broadcasts in North Vietnam in 1954. Col. Nguyen Van Chau, former director of the Dept. of Psychological Warfare for the Diem regime, revealed that a phony "liberation radio" station had been set up and had threatened reprisals against northern Catholics.

internewsroundup

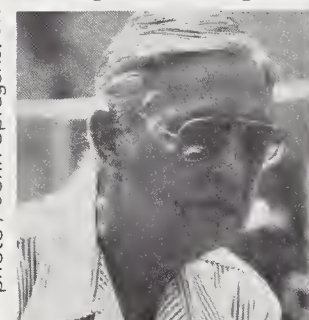
AMBASSADOR MARTIN & THE BLOODBATH RUMORS

Newsweek reported April 28 that its correspondents had been unable to confirm reports emanating from the U.S. embassy in

s.vietnam Saigon of a communist bloodbath in areas recently occupied by the Provisional Revolutionary Government. The single source of the latest bloodbath rumors appears to be Ambassador Graham Martin, whom colleagues describe as "an overzealous apologist for [former] Pres. Thieu." Martin is said to be working overtime to maintain U.S. support for the floundering Saigon regime, sending to Washington long denunciations of alleged communist

atrocities. CBS used these reports as the only source for an alarmist bloodbath story aired the night of April 17.

However, most reports from the new PRG zones indicate that life is returning to normal, that the PRG is pursuing a policy of national reconciliation, and that there has been no bloodbath.



Ambassador Graham Martin

Some observers believe that it would not be beyond Ambassador Martin to make up the bloodbath reports. Martin once advised the State Dept. to lie to Sen. Edward Kennedy, who had submitted a list of questions about U.S. policy in Vietnam. Insomnia is said to keep Martin up long into the night sending bitter cables to Washington as the Saigon army collapses around him. "He is not a well man," Rep. Pete McCloskey (R-Cal.) told the *New York Times* April 18. And Rep. John Flynt, a conservative Democrat from Georgia who recently met with Martin on a special congressional tour of Indochina, is said to have told Pres. Ford: "One thing we all agree on is that your ambassador to South Vietnam is a disaster."

CONFIDENTIAL REPORT EXPOSES KAUNDA

A confidential report leaked to the press in Salisbury, Rhodesia, on April 23 has embarrassed Zambia's President Kenneth

rhodesia Kaunda and may well undermine his efforts to mediate the conflict in Rhodesia, where African guerrilla forces are already deeply suspicious of his motives. The report by two prominent Rhodesian landowners who held talks in Zambia earlier this month with Kaunda quotes the president as saying he believes it will take more than ten years to achieve African majority rule in Rhodesia. The secret document was made public by the African National Council, which is demanding a rapid transfer of power from Rhodesia's white-minority regime to the 5.5 million African majority population.

Kaunda recently cracked down on the Rhodesian liberation movements based in Zambia, arresting some 300 members of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU). He has been the main African leader advocating cooperation with Prime Minister John Vorster's apartheid regime in South Africa in order to negotiate a peaceful settlement in Rhodesia. In mid-April Kaunda met in Washington with Pres. Ford and Sec. of State Kissinger to explain his southern Africa "detente" strategy and to line up U.S. support. Kaunda was greeted by protests from a number of African liberation support groups, who accuse him of selling out the movement for immediate majority rule in Rhodesia.

The report quotes Kaunda as saying that South Africa's Vorster used to be regarded as a devil in black Africa, but

because of his recent actions and speeches he is now regarded by blacks in Zambia as a great man. Kaunda is also reported to have told his two Rhodesian visitors that a sudden move to majority rule in Rhodesia could lead to a breakdown of the economy and would help no one.

So far there has been no comment on the report from the Zambian government. If the report, released by the ANC's Dr. Edson Sithole, proves to be accurate, Kaunda stands to lose whatever influence he has had over the African independence movement in Rhodesia. The report could also damage Kaunda's reputation in the Organization of African Unity. At its recent conference in Tanzania, the OAU rejected "dialogue" and "detente" with the racist regimes in Rhodesia and South Africa, but it did back Kaunda's contacts with Vorster after Zambia's foreign minister told the OAU delegates that Vorster had promised privately to withdraw all South African forces from Rhodesia by May 31.

SULTAN CONCERNED ABOUT THE NORTH?

Sultan Qabus bin-Said appears concerned that the guerrillas who have been waging war in Dhofar province for many years may

oman be planning to open a second front in the north. On April 20, a government official announced that 17 persons had been sentenced for "subversive activities" after a four-day trial. Four were sentenced to death,



and 13 others—including two women—received prison terms of from three years to life. The 17 were accused of membership in the guerrilla organization, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman, and charged with plotting to establish a base in northern Oman.

What the government fears most is a guerrilla challenge to the sultan's authority over the Musandam Peninsula—the strategic enclave jutting into the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow channel through which roughly half of the non-communist world's oil must pass. The *Los Angeles Times* carried a report April 24 from a correspondent in a remote Omani village overlooking the strait who learned of a "secret project" to build a base on an offshore island. According to this report, "The isle contained a small British naval station until a general British withdrawal from this region in 1971. The base seemed deserted, with many of its buildings demolished, but an installation of some kind—perhaps underwater detection apparatus—is slated for the island, sources said." Earlier this year there was speculation in the Arab press that the U.S. was negotiating with Oman for a base on the Musandam Peninsula. The State Department has denied making this request.

KISSINGER CANCELS VISIT

Secretary of State Kissinger announced April 21 that he was postponing his planned trip to Latin America because of the

latin america grave situation in Indochina. Rumors that the trip, scheduled to begin April 23, would be cancelled had been circulating for several weeks, but the State Department kept the host countries—Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela—guessing until the final moment. The visit, scaled down to three days, was

already being viewed as a minimal gesture by many Latin Americans who feel that Kissinger has consistently snubbed Latin America. Some diplomats in Washington predicted that the cancellation would be the "final blow" to the "new dialogue" initiated by the secretary of state in Mexico City a year ago.

Kissinger had originally planned to visit Latin America in March, but the trip was delayed because of the almost unanimous outcry in the hemisphere over the new U.S. trade law which includes discriminatory clauses against Venezuela and Ecuador. Kissinger then promised to make the trip in April—in time to exchange views on matters expected to come up when the General Assembly of the Organization of American States meets May 8 in Washington. Among the topics on the OAS agenda is a proposal to lift the two-third voting rule so as to clear the way for an end to the blockade of Cuba. Other subjects will include the U.S. trade law and the progress—or lack of it—on negotiating a new Panama canal treaty.

"All that's missing now," said one diplomat, "is for Kissinger to make a new trip to the Mideast or be preoccupied with Indochina when the OAS meets, and name a 'stand-in' from the State Department as he did when we met in Quito" last fall to debate ending the Cuba blockade.

BANANA BRIBE SCANDAL TOPPLES PRESIDENT

Some 5,000 people, organized by the Federation of University Students of Honduras, held a rally in the capital of Tegucigalpa on April 23 to support the overthrow of President Oswaldo Lopez Arellano, who was accused of taking a \$1.25 million bribe from the United Brands Corp. The students, according to Prensa Latina, also attacked the role of U.S. multinational food companies in their country.

Lopez was overthrown in a bloodless coup d'état on April 22 by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, after he had refused to submit to a government investigation into charges that he had been bribed by United Brands (formerly United Fruit Co.). The new head of state is Colonel Alberto Melgar Castro, who replaced Lopez as chief of the armed forces on April 1. Melgar was described by Western news agencies as a moderate, backed by a left-of-center group of young lieutenant colonels, but his new cabinet appointments reflect status-quo politics. The new government pledged to carry on the modest agrarian reform program initiated by the deposed president under pressure from peasant rebellions. Honduras is the poorest country in Central America, with 57 percent of the arable land

owned by the local gentry or foreign corporations. The country's 2.8 million people are dependent on the U.S.-dominated production and export of bananas, sugar and coffee.

Threatened by an exposé in the *Wall Street Journal*, United Brands admitted earlier this month that it had paid a \$1.25 million bribe to a "high official" of the Honduran government in order to lower a tax that had been placed on banana exports. United Brands has since been indicted by the Securities and Exchange Commission and sued for mismanagement of corporate funds by a number of stockholders. And in an incident now tied to the bribe scandal, Eli Black, the chairman of the board and chief executive officer of United Brands committed suicide Feb. 3 by jumping from his 44th floor office in the Pan Am building in New York.

PINOCHET AND PERON TIE THE KNOT

Chilean junta chief, General Augusto Pinochet, and Argentina's President Isabel Peron met April 18 at the heavily-guarded

argentina Moron air base outside Buenos Aires and agreed to strengthen the economic and political ties between their countries, including greater coordination of anti-leftist repression. The five-hour summit conference symbolized Argentina's rush to the right and its growing alliance with the extreme right-wing military dictatorships in Chile and Uruguay. Argentina recently signed an agreement for police and security cooperation with Uruguay, arresting 21 alleged members of the Tupamaros (Uruguay's Marxist urban guerrilla movement) in Argentina earlier this month. The conclusion of a similar agreement with Chile will strike hardest at the estimated 15,000 Chilean political refugees who fled to Argentina following the bloody 1973 military coup in their country.



Gen. Pinochet and Pres. Peron

The growing international cooperation between the governments of Uruguay, Chile and Argentina has been challenged by ever-closer cooperation between leftist guerrilla groups. The Uruguayan Tupamaros, the Argentine People's Revolutionary Army (ERP), the Chilean Left Revolutionary Movement (MIR), and the Bolivian National Liberation Army (ELN) announced in Lisbon last month the formation of a coordinating committee.

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EGYPT: According to the Kuwaiti newspaper *Al Sia Sa*, Pres. Sadat has charged that Libya's Col. Qaddafi offered Egypt \$2.5 billion before the October 1973 war if it would sever relations with Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi and Qatar—countries Qaddafi labeled "backward and reactionary." (*Los Angeles Times*, 4/13) • **ISRAEL:** Immigration for the first three months of 1975 is 50% less than for the same period in 1974 (4,800 persons for 1975, as against 9,600 in 1974), while overall immigration for 1974 was down 42% from 1973. (Agence France Presse 4/21) • **SYRIA:** Senior members of the ruling Syrian Baath party and the director of the Syrian news agency have reportedly been arrested on charges of spying for Iraq. (*Washington Post* 4/10) • **ETHIOPIA:** Fighting between Eritrean guerrillas and Ethiopian troops has ceased in the provincial capital of Asmara, but is still raging in the countryside, according to the leader of the Eritrean Liberation Front. (AFP 4/18) • **MOZAMBIQUE:** The South African paper *Sunday Express* claims that more than 1,000 mercenaries have been recruited to participate in an invasion in the next six months to overthrow the revolutionary government of Mozambique. (Prensa Latina 4/21) • **BRAZIL:** The major daily *Jornal do Brasil* reports that the right-wing death squad has killed 30 people in little more than a month, and that in the last year and a half, it

has taken 400 victims. (PL 4/22) • **COFFEE:** The four largest coffee exporters—Brazil, Colombia, Angola and the Ivory Coast—have reportedly failed to come to agreement on the setting up of a coffee producers organization to control supplies and prices. (*Christian Science Monitor* 4/21) • **AUSTRALIA:** The government says it is considering obtaining crude oil supplies from China. (AFP 4/16) • **CHINA:** After a visit to Peking the chairman of Exxon says he is interested in providing technical assistance to China for offshore oil development, although he acknowledged that it is China's policy to develop its oil resources without foreign help. (Kyodo 4/24) • **PHILIPPINES:** The Catholic hierarchy appealed to Pres. Marcos to examine every humane consideration for giving a fair and just trial to opposition leader Benigno Aquino, who has been in jail for 30 months under martial law. (AFP 4/23) • **CIA:** According to Jack Anderson, as far back as 1953 the CIA held secret high-level meetings on the question of flying saucers and concluded that there was no evidence that UFOs posed a "direct threat to national security." • **CHILE:** The Air Force, carabineros and civil police carried out a combined operation in three barrios in southern Santiago to detain "anti-social elements," a term often applied to opponents of the military junta. (AFP 4/19)

Lebanon's Bloody April

Lebanon edged closer to the brink of civil war for one week this month, as armed clashes between Palestinian guerrillas and the right-wing Phalangist militia left nearly 200 dead and hundreds more wounded. Egypt sent in the secretary-general of the Arab League—Mahmoud Riad—to negotiate a cease-fire between the two sides whose regular confrontations have toppled cabinets and plunged Lebanon into repeated political crises since 1969.

The Palestine Liberation Organization charged from the outset of the mid-April clashes that the confrontation had been instigated by the United States—just as it blamed the State Department for King Hussein's crackdown on the PLO in Jordan in "Black September," 1970. Many observers feared throughout the week-long crisis that Israel would take advantage of the situation and launch a ground strike through southern Lebanon, around the Golan Heights, to threaten the Syrian capital of Damascus from the West.

As the crisis subsided April 17, PLO official Abu Saleh denounced the United States, Israel, and the Lebanese right wing for conspiring to suppress the Palestinians. The Algerian weekly, *African Revolution*, ran a strongly worded editorial April 19 which also questioned the links between "Western imperialism" and the Lebanese right—while characterizing the

clashes as an attempt at the physical liquidation of the Palestinian resistance.

The Lebanese right argues that the presence of Palestinian guerrillas in Lebanon exposes the country to an intolerable risk of Israeli reprisals by destroying the unofficial neutrality which has permitted Lebanon to escape past Arab-Israeli wars. Since the PLO constitutes a state within a state, the right contends that it threatens Lebanon's sovereignty—and the right in turn justifies its own 5,000-strong private army as a counter to the PLO guerrillas.

But the Palestinians also raise social and political questions for Lebanon outside the Arab-Israeli conflict. Lebanon's political system rests on what might be called a demographic gerrymander: for 40 years parliamentary seats have been evenly divided between Moslems and Christians because the two populations were found to be roughly equal in numbers in a 1934 census. Under this delicately balanced system, the president of the country is traditionally Christian, the prime minister Moslem. The best educated guess is that the Moslem birth rate is higher than the Christian, but the government fears a new census which would confirm popular suspicion of a Moslem majority.

The Lebanese left is predominantly Moslem, while the right is mainly Christian. The Christian community has many ties to the West, and it was a rightist government which called in the U.S. Marines in 1958 when Moslem radicalism was on the rise.

The Moslem left offers strong support to the PLO, while the presence of 300,000 Palestinian refugees inside Lebanon confronts the right with an impossible dilemma. It cannot propose assimilating the Palestinians in Lebanon without acknowledging a Moslem majority and losing its control in parliament. But the right cannot support PLO claims to regain the Palestinian homeland without involving Lebanon in war with Israel. The most extreme rightists—who call themselves Phalangists after the supporters of Spain's Generalissimo Franco—favor a third course: eliminating the Palestinian presence (either expelling the guerrillas to Syria or liquidating them by civil war).

In the latest bloodshed—touched off when Phalangists ambushed a bus, killing 27 Palestinians—the Palestinians reportedly suffered the heaviest casualties but inflicted tremendous financial loss—the paper *An Nabar* estimated \$100 million in losses—through bombings and sabotage

directed at the business centers of the Christian community.

The government resisted rightist demands to bring in the army, and even the police have kept a low profile in enforcing the uneasy cease-fire. The two opposing communities so far remain sealed off from one another, with each side's militia inspecting the papers of anyone who wishes to cross the barricades into Palestinian or Phalangist territory.

The risk of renewed fighting remains, and the latest chapter in this conflict has shown neither side reluctant to resort to any of the modern weapons in its arsenal. The right-wing militia is said to consist of 5,000 men, but the Phalangist party itself claims 65,000 civilian supporters. Lebanon's own armed forces number only 15,000 troops. The PLO has 12,000 guerrillas in regular units, with an estimated 25,000 militia-trained supporters spread over 14 refugee camps in Lebanon. The ingredients for a catastrophic confrontation are present—with or without external instigation or exploitation. Lebanon figures to be the most volatile Middle East flashpoint in the weeks and months ahead.

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